Procurement of paddy from Orissa

894. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have started procuring paddy directly from the farmers of Orissa to control distress sale by them;

(b) if so, the number of additional procurement centres opened in the State, district-wise; and

(c) the fresh initiatives to help the beleaguered farmers of the State to get minimum price of their crops as fixed by the centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In Orissa, the procurement of paddy is being done by the State Government through its agencies, *viz.*, the Orissa State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. and the Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies (PACSs), as well as by the Food Corporation of India (FCI). The number of additional centres opened are as follows:—

(i) The Orissa State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. has opened a total of 46 purchase centres in 17 districts, as against 42 centres last year. 5 additional centres have been opened in Bolangir district and one additional centre in Mayurbhanj district (one centre each have been reduced in Nowrangpur and Koraput districts).

(ii) In addition as many as 295 PACSs, covering all the major procuring districts, will operate procurement centres in the State as against 152 PACSs last year.

(iii) The FCI has opened 42 purchase centres in 13 districts. This year 2 additional centres have been opened, one each in Keonjhar and Boudh districts.

(c) The following initiative have been taken in the State to purchase paddy under the Minimum Support Price operations:—

(i) Opening of additional centres by the State Agencies as well as by the FCI;

(ii) Engaging a large number of PACSs in procurement operations;.

(iii) Ensuring prompt payment to farmers;

(iv) Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities in all procurement centres.